

**Critical Reading and Writing: Fiction**  
College of the Holy Cross, Spring 2002  
TR 11:00-12:15 pm, Beav 105

Instructor: Paige Reynolds  
Office Hours: Fenwick 230, R 9:30-10:30 or by appointment  
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**Texts:** Lawn, Beverly. *Forty Short Stories* (Bedford)  
Douglass, Frederick. *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Signet)  
Morrison, Toni. *Beloved* (Plume)  
Hacker, Diane. *Writer's Reference*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Bedford)

**Course Objectives:** This course will introduce you to the basic principles of reading fiction and writing critical papers. During the semester, we'll study the formal components of the genre, simultaneously working to hone your capacity to express ideas about fictions both in discussions and written analyses. We'll begin the semester by reading and talking about short stories, and eventually we'll read and study an autobiography, a novel, and a film. Because these texts represent different ways of storytelling, they demand that we refine our understanding of "fiction" – a term we'll think about deeply and repeatedly during the course.

**Coursework:**

**Class participation (10%):** Come to class having read the material closely and be prepared to participate actively in discussion. This class lets us discover all kinds of voices -- but that means you must keep up with all of the reading and attend each class. Unexcused absences jeopardize your grade; more than six absences mean you likely will not pass the course.

**Analyzing the Text Exercises (10%):** The assignments will be graded, albeit more loosely than your formal papers. If you miss a class when I collect these, you will receive a zero for that particular assignment; however, I will drop at least one of these grades before determining your final "exercises" cumulative grade.

**Short Papers (30% total, 15% each):** You will be required to write two short papers. We will discuss the expectations for each paper in class prior to the due date.

**Film Response (10%):** You will write a short response to *Hoop Dreams*. Again, we will discuss the standards for the review prior to the due date.

**Revision Work (10%):** You will be asked to revise either your first or second paper. The quality, rather than merely the quantity, of the changes you make will serve as the basis of this grade.

**Peer Reviews (5%):** You will peer review your colleagues' papers, and your critiques will be assessed for the amount of time and thought you put into helping them improve their papers.

**Final Paper (25%):** In this longer paper (8 pgs.), you will write a critical paper about *Beloved*. In this paper, you will make a contestable claim about the novel, then support that claim with evidence and analysis. Five percent of this grade will be based on your first draft of the paper.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** For these written assignments, I will expect your paper to be in proper MLA form. These papers will be typed, double spaced, stylistically and grammatically correct.

**Basic Ground Rules:**

- Plan to meet with me during office hours at least once this semester. Also, please feel free to talk with me about reading or writing during office hours.
- Be prepared for a few changes in the syllabus, if we see that class needs demand those changes.
- Don't use the internet or other resources to help you write your papers. Trust me, trust me, trust me – internet research for CRAW analyses almost always weakens your papers.
- Don't plagiarize. If you're confused about what constitutes plagiarism, see Hacker 82-85 or ask me questions.
- Late papers are penalized 1/3 of a grade for each date they are late, including weekends. So Friday's A- is Monday's B-.

**Reading and Assignment Schedule:**

T 1/15 Introduction; Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"

R 1/17 How to Read: Chopin, "The Story of an Hour"  
**Assessment Paper Due**

T 1/22 What Happens?: Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"

R 1/24 When and Where?: Crane, "The Open Boat"; O'Brien, "The Things They Carried"

T 1/22 Who's Telling?: Cisneros, "The House on Mango Street"; Welty, "A Good Man..."

R 1/31 How Told?: Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"; Atwood, "Happy Endings"

T 2/5 Why Tell?: Jackson, "The Lottery"; Carver, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love"

R 2/7 Putting It Together: Joyce, "Araby"

T 2/12 Putting It Together (Again): Oates, "Where Are You Going..."

R 2/14 Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

T 2/19 Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

R 2/21 Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"

T 2/26 Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"

R 2/28 In-class writing workshop  
**Draft of Paper One Due**

**F 2/29 Paper One Due**

*M 3/4- F 3/8 Spring Break!*

T 3/12 Mukherjee, "The Management of Grief"; Moore, "People Like That..." (handout)

R 3/14 Tan, "Two Kinds"; Erdrich, "The Red Convertible"

T 3/19 Ellison, "Battle Royal"

R 3/21 Walker, "Everyday Use"; Kincaid, "Girl"

T 3/26 Faulkner, "Barn Burning"; Welty, "A Worn Path"

**F 3/27 Paper Two Due**

**R 4/28 – M 4/1 Easter Recess!**

T 4/2 Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (chs. 1-8)

R 4/4 Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (chs. 9-end)

TBA Screening of *Hoop Dreams* (dir. Steve James, 1994)

**F 4/5 Revision Due**

T 4/9 James, *Hoop Dreams*  
**Film Response Due**

R 4/11 Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

T 4/16 Morrison, *Beloved* (one)

R 4/18 Morrison, *Beloved* (two)

T 4/23 Morrison, *Beloved* (three)

R 4/25 Final Paper Workshop  
**Draft of Final Paper Due**

F 4/26 Student Conferences for Final Paper

**T 4/30 Study Period**

**F 5/3 Final Paper Due**